

Message Text

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SUBJ: BANISHED LABOR LEADERS LOSE JOBS

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1. SUMMARY: AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THEIR BANISHMENT, FOUR DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION LEADERS HAVE LOST THEIR JOBS AND UNION POSITIONS. THEY PLAN TO TAKE THEIR CASES TO COURT. THE COMMUNIST AND CLAT TRADE UNION LEADERS RETAIN BOTH JOBS AND UNION POSITIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. "DINAMICO" LEADER JUAN MANUEL SEPULVEDA WAS FIRED BY HIS EMPLOYER "COMPANIA TECNOLÓGICA INDUSTRIAL" - FENSA-MADEMSA NOVEMBER 24 FOR ENGAGING IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN VIOLATION OF DECREE LAW 1697 OF MARCH 11, 1977 WHICH BANNED ALL POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY. THE COMPANY ARGUED THAT HIS BANISHMENT WAS PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE OF HIS VIOLATION OF THIS DECREE AND GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL.

3. ON SEPULVEDA'S RETURN FROM BANISHMENT, THE COMPANY STOOD BY ITS DECISION REFUSING TO ALLOW HIM TO WORK. SEPULVEDA, A MECHANICAL ENGINEER, SAID THAT MOST OF HIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAVINGS HAD BEEN SPENT ON FEEDING HIS FAMILY WHILE HE WAS IN THE CHILEAN ALTIPLANO. HIS WIFE HAD TO BORROW MONEY TO MAKE THE TRIP TO SEE HIM AND BRING HIM WARM CLOTHES. HE TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT UNLESS HE FOUND WORK SOON, HE AND HIS FAMILY WOULD BE DESTITUTE.

4. BANISHED COPPER LABOR LEADER MILTON PUGA AND HIS WIFE

CAME TO THE EMBASSY TO EXPRESS THEIR APPRECIATION TO THE US GOVERNMENT AND THE AMERICAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. THEY HAD THE SAME ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AS SEPULVEDA. PUGA STATED THAT ALL THREE COPPER LEADERS LOST THEIR JOBS AND UNION POSITIONS. ALL WERE IN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FINANCIAL POSITIONS AND WERE FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO FIND WORK. PUGA SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLS MOST JOB SOURCES IN RANCAGUA AND EVEN PRIVATE EMPLOYERS REFUSE TO HIRE THEM. AT PRESENT, PUGA SAID THEIR ONLY HOPE WAS TO TAKE THE CASE TO COURT IN THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE COURT WOULD FIND THAT FIRING THEM WITHOUT CHARGES OR TRIAL CONSTITUTED AN UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE. HOWEVER, PUGA NOTED THAT EVEN IF THE COURTS REQUIRED THE STATE MINING COMPANY TO REINSTATE THEM, THE COMPANY COULD STILL REFUSE AND SIMPLY PAY THEM AN INDEMNIFICATION AMOUNTING TO SIX MONTHS SALARY. PUGA SAID THAT HE, CARLOS ARELLANO AND JUNA FINCHEIRA WERE AGREED THAT THE COURTS WERE THEIR ONLY ROAD.

5. PUGA BLAMES GUILLERMO MEDINA, COUNSELOR OF STATE AND SOLE SURVIVING MEMBER OF THE COPPER UNION'S EXECUTIVE BOARD FOR THE THREE BANISHMENTS. COMMUNIST TRADE UNION LEADER HECTOR CUEVAS WAS ALSO BANISHED BUT HE CONTINUES AS A FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE OF HIS BUILDING TRADES UNION. CARLOS FREZ, PRESIDENT OF THE PORT WORKERS UNION AND THE

CLAT AFFILIATED SINGLE FEDERATION OF WORKERS (FUT) ALSO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RETAINS HIS JOB AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. FREZ IS A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE AND IS PROTECTED AS A UNION LEADER BY LAW. HOWEVER, MANY DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION LEADERS BELIEVE THAT FREZ WILL SOON BE OUSTED.
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